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S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN

WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

SPECIAL FAST,

JULY 23d, 1812.

—*—*—*—*—*—*—
BY SAMUEL AUSTIN, D. D.
—*—*—*—*—*—*—

PUBLISHED FROM THE PRESS, BY THE DESIRE OF SOME WHO
HEARD IT, AND LIKED IT, BY THE DESIRE OF SOME WHO
HEARD IT, AND DID NOT LIKE IT, AND BY THE DE-
SIRE OF OTHERS WHO DID NOT HEAR IT, BUT
IMAGINE THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE LIK-
ED IT, IF THEY HAD.

PRINTED AT WORCESTER, BY ISAAC STURTEVANT.

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By transfer

Nov. 30, 1925

PREFATORY REMARKS.

IT is denied that this Sermon is political. True indeed it is, that there are many observations in it, that have respect to the administration of our national government, and the state of our country. Facts of a political nature are adverted to. But they are produced in evidence to a point of religious instruction. Moral and religious instruction is the drift of every thing that is said. Can we not distinguish here? Or, are we determined to be blind to all distinctions which do not favour our prejudices? Were a preacher, in his discourse, professedly to discuss a mere political question, as gentlemen on the floor of Congress, or essayists in the news-papers, do, limiting his views to the question, under that character, it is confessed that his discourse might pass for a political one. But if he professes to urge a point of religious instruction, and his remarks, founded in truth and in fact, though the greater part of them may have respect to subjects which are termed political, do actually terminate in that instruction and enforce it, his discourse is strictly and properly religious. It perfectly accords with his official trust, and the end he should constantly keep in view, as a preacher of righteousness. A large proportion of the duties of man, whether he be a ruler or a subject, certainly relates to the country to which he belongs, and the government under which he lives. God is either obeyed or disobeyed, honoured or the opposite, by a ruler, in every part of his official conduct; and that conduct is, of course, right or wrong, in a religious point of view. He stands accountable to God for the manner in which he employs the authority with which he is vested, and that influence over the minds of others which is attached to it. So it is with the ordinary subjects of government. What they do as citizens, in the exercise of their rights of suffrage, in aiding particular designs and measures, and in the disposal of their property and physical strength, is obedience to God or the contrary. The whole of their conduct is right or wrong, religiously considered. If they engage in an interest which is subversive of Christianity, or of the safety and happiness of their fellow-beings, they will be condemned by their Judge at their last trial, and they may, with perfect propriety,

be reproved by those publick servants whom he has sent to detect their iniquity and warn them of their danger. Hence the pungent address of Nathan to David, "Thou art the man." Hence the faithful apostle of the Gentiles could say, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Fully and very impressively to this purpose are the words of the 2d Psalm. "Why do the Heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and vex them in his sore displeasure.—Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little."

Let then the ministers of the Gospel, who, with a few solitary exceptions, are happily agreed in what concerns the true interest of their country, and are ardently attached to its best prosperity, stand firm at their post, in this day of perilous disorganization, when so great an effort is made to deter them from the honourable discharge of their duty. Let them stand as vigilant watchmen on the ramparts of Zion, looking out for the enemy, whether he is meditating an insidious attack, or an open assault. Let them attentively observe the signs of the times, search out the evil and fully expose it, preach all righteousness as essentially belonging to the gospel, and meet reproach and poverty cheerfully, if it is their lot, while resisting the spread of delusion, and exemplifying the righteousness they inculcate. Let them carry the interests of religion and their country to the Throne of Grace in daily prayer. Acting thus in character, they will always have the well-informed and sober part of the community on their side. They will have an interesting agency in the good work of transmitting to posterity the invaluable legacy received from their fathers, and they will be publickly approved by their Redeemer, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven.

N. B. The Sermon is word for word as it was delivered, except those words inclosed in brackets.

SERMON.

JEREMIAH, xviii. 7, 8.

AT WHAT INSTANT I SHALL SPEAK CONCERNING A NATION, AND CONCERNING A KINGDOM, TO PLUCK UP, AND TO PULL DOWN, AND TO DESTROY IT;—IF THAT NATION, AGAINST WHOM I HAVE PRONOUNCED, TURN FROM THEIR EVIL, I WILL REPENT OF THE EVIL I THOUGHT TO DO UNTO THEM.

IN this passage, my brethren, as in thousands of others, contained in the Bible, we are shewn how admirably the strict justice of God is tempered, and, if I may so say, moderated by his mercy; that he is slow to anger and of great compassion, and that he ever leaves room for individuals and nations to escape the judgments he had denounced against them, by that which is perfectly reasonable, independent of such a denunciation, their unfeigned repentance. We may properly consider the passage (for indeed it is expressly made such by the terms of it) as a general rule, by which we are to interpret denunciations of God against societies of men, and, by parity of reason, against individual sinners, except in cases which are expressly excluded from the exercise of mercy. It is a rule which is to apply to all times, and to all nations. Though

the denunciations of God may be in terms greatly alarming, and seem to render certain a speedy, and awful destruction, yet the state of the nation whom they respect is not desperate. The denunciation is not absolute, but conditional. It may be, and indeed we have the blessed assurance that it will be, set aside, by a timely and sincere repentance. This is the term of favour. Moral evil, or sin, committed by a nation, is the cause of the denunciation issued. If that be removed by repentance, the denunciation will of course be void.

These sentiments are on the face of the passage. “At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;—*if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*”

Since nations, as well as individuals, or, since men in their associated capacities, as well as in their separate conditions and actions, are necessarily subject to the government of God (for the very terms of the passage suppose that they are) what an endearing display do these sentiments make of his government, and what a powerful inducement do they set before us, to persuade us to turn from the evil we have committed! Our nation, my brethren, is concerned in this general rule of the divine government, as much as any nation on earth, and perhaps in a more interesting view than any other. Probably there never was a *time* when this rule had a more interest-

ing application to us than at the present moment; and to me it appears, that the proclamation of our pious and amiable chief magistrate, calling us to these exercises of humiliation and prayer, perfectly comports with it. It is certain we are a sinful people. It is certain that the judgments of God hang, in awful aspects, over us. And it is equally certain that a sincere humiliation, which will involve a turning away from the evil we have committed, is the only, and, at the same time, a sure way of escape. Let us then lay hold of the rule, and eagerly carry it into practice. That we may realize in some manner its application to us, and feel the urgent and absolute necessity there is of our complying with the duty it sets before us, let us notice some of the evidences we have that a denunciation, like that expressed in the text, has gone out against us; 2d, the duty upon which a revocation of this denunciation is suspended; and, 3d, the force of the motive which the text sets before us, to persuade us to the performance of this duty.

I. Then, we are to notice some of the evidences we have that a denunciation like that of the text has gone out against us, as a people. Your minister, my brethren, does not make any pretensions to prophecy. He does not pretend to have any intercourse with the Most High God, beyond that of the least favoured of his people. He has seen no visible appearance, indicating a special presence of God, nor heard any audible sound from him, expressing any particular denunciation against this people. The time has been when

God has literally spoken. His voice has been heard. He has charged his prophets with particular and express messages ; and they have faithfully delivered them, as coming directly from him. They preface their messages generally with a, *Thus saith the Lord*. This manner of communication has for centuries failed. Since the revelations of God have been committed to writing, and authentick copies of them multiplied through the world, he has ceased to speak by audible sounds. Has he not therefore spoken? Yes, indeed! The whole volume of inspiration is his word to us. Here he speaks to our understandings; to our consciences, and to our hearts, intelligibly and impressively ; not less so than if we heard his voice. “ We have also,” says Peter, “ a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts: for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” The events of God’s Providence are operations of his hand, which we are attentively and teachably to consider, as in perfect agreement with his word, and expressing the aspects of his government, and the purposes he has formed. Hence our Lord reproves the blind and unteachable pharisees in this manner, “ The pharisees also with the sduucees came, and tempting, desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening ye say, It will be fair weather, for

the sky is red; and in the morning, it will be foul weather to-day; for the sky is red and lowering. O, ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but, can ye not discern the signs of the times? Taking these two concurrent sources of instruction to guide us, if we are teachable, we shall find sufficient evidence at least to alarm us, that God has spoken against our nation, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destróy it.

1. We are a people, in an uncommon degree, laden with iniquity. Iniquity is the ground of the denunciation, and the greater that iniquity is, the more clearly is the denunciation certified.—We are expressly told that an haughty spirit is before a fall. And God says to rebellious Israel, “Thou hast fallen *by thine iniquity*.” He informs them that their iniquities had separated between them and him, and caused him to hide his face from them. This is the uniform doctrine of the scripture, that iniquity prepares for, and certainly eventuates in, ruin. Iniquity then, reigning among a people, has an alarming language, which it is easy to understand. The course of Providence agrees to this testimony of the scripture. I admit that some nations, who have gone far in iniquity, have continued for a considerable period, as the Babylonian, the Grecian, the Roman, and the Chinese empires. And we do not determine how soon the destruction will come. It may come soon and suddenly. The patience of God may delay it. But it will come sooner or later. Have not the three first of these kingdoms long

ago perished? Have not nearly all the ancient nations of the earth gone to destruction?

“What are the earth’s wide kingdoms else,
“But mighty hills of prey?”

However, our situation differs materially from that of almost all the nations of the earth; and the difference is against us. [Our nation] compares more than any other, with ancient Israel, in its origin, its primitive character, its deliverances, its means, its spiritual blessings, and religious professions. The language would seem to apply to us in a remarkable manner, which God addressed to them—“Hear the word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O, ye children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying; You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities.” No nation in the world were disciplined with so much severity as ancient Israel, who professed to have God for their God. What awful, successive national disasters and captivities did they sustain! What scenes of distress marked their history, till they were finally removed from the good land which God had given them, by a dispersion, which has lasted to the present day! From this dispersion they will not be restored but by a general and most sincere repentance.

When I say that we are a people uncommonly laden with iniquity, I would not be understood to mean, that there is less of the fear of God here than in other parts of the world; or that we ex-

ceed other nations in those vices and crimes, which render property and life insecure. But, considering the depths and extent of our depravity, and particularly the malignity and extent of our unbelief, which is put down in the word of God as the most odious and punishable of all sins, the great deliverances which have been wrought in our favour, the light and means which we enjoy, and the rich blessings, temporal and spiritual, which have been incessantly showered down upon us, I am constrained to believe that no nation on the globe is so offensively wicked in the sight of God as ours; and that there is in none such a complete moral preparation for a dreadful overthrow. The land is certainly full of iniquity—of iniquity of the most detestable character. In this iniquity we may learn, if we will, our national doom.

2. We are a most unhappily *divided* people. Having a form of government, the best indeed conceivable, as to its elective and deliberative character, but which, because it is a government of choice and opinion, and not of arbitrary power, cannot proceed with any energy, nor even exist, but through the influence of those dispositions which unite, and which lead individuals to regard the good of the whole more than any private aggrandizement or advantage, we are yet most miserably divided. We are divided under the influence of men, some of them are to be found, no doubt, on both sides, who are influenced by ambition and *will*; who are for accomplishing, at all events; their party designs, and who

lose sight, entirely, of the real good of their country, in the licentiousness of principle and the heat of passion; some of whom, in all probability, there are strong indications of it, are the willing tools of foreign despotism, and corrupted by foreign gold. We are divided with a rancour and licentiousness, which have already threatened liberty and life; nay, which have burst forth in mobs and riots. These divisions have, in some cases, brought citizens into assemblies of mere consultation, such assemblies as our constitution of government and our laws guarantee, with weapons of death at their side. The lives of some citizens, following their lawful employments, have been pursued with the spirit of murder, and a determination to take them away, if possible, merely because they have dared to express their opinions upon publick concerns and the measures of government. Party interests have been pursued in many instances tumultuously, and without respect to law or decency.—Humanity is outraged. The elective franchise is in fact virtually taken from a portion of the citizens. They may neither speak, nor vote.—They must be silent, and consent to be deprived of their privileges, or feel the smart of party resentment. Even the children of our streets have learnt to rally themselves under the names of the two opposing parties, and to use language, as I myself have heard, of invective and threatening. I apprehend that no nation on the globe is so convulsed by party animosity, and whose real interest is so entirely overlooked, through the blind-

ing influence of party zeal. What effect do these divisions have upon us? Do they make us potent and respectable, as a people? Do they make us terrible to our national enemies, and place us beyond their intrigues? Do they beget in us mutual confidence, and make us happy among ourselves? Quite the reverse. They spoil our intercourse. They eat up the comfort of life. They turn our strength into weakness, our wisdom into folly, and our glory into shame. They make us the sport of more powerful nations, and as prey for their teeth. What do they indicate, in the natural course of things, with respect to the future? Most certainly they have a strong and powerful tendency, and they rapidly produce the effect, to bring about the entire prostration of our national dignity, of law, and of government; to let in invaders on every side; to stimulate the thousands, and the ten thousands of slaves in our country, to rise and attempt to emancipate themselves by a massacre like to that of St. Domingo; and to push us on to the destruction of one another, in scenes of cruelty, like those of France, in which Robespierre, Marat and Carrier had so conspicuous a part. As they belong to the system of Providence, and are parts of that system, they have a clear indication of our approaching ruin. For thus we have it in the Lamentations of Jeremiah. "The anger of the Lord hath divided them; he will no more regard them." And our Saviour tells us, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation." In our divisions then God speaks to our nation, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it. [a]

3. God speaks in this language with respect to our nation, in the most calamitous and threatening war into which we have been recently precipitated. This war is a providential event. It has been sent upon us by God, and is evidently an awful scourge of his hand, expressive of his wrath, and almost audibly telling us, that he has come out against us to destroy us. War, when it is the least exceptionable in its moral character, that is, when it is altogether defensive, and a nation seems to be driven into it, to repel an unjust and very threatening invasion; and when its progress and issue are as prosperous as could be wished, is a great calamity, and an awful scourge of God. It is a great calamity. It is necessarily attended with a great expence of property and of lives. Its effect upon the morals of a people is most pernicious, and it produces immense poignant distress, not only in the wounded and the dying, but to those who survive, and who are left to spend the residue of life in bereavement and grief. *My father, my husband, my son, fell, alas, in such a battle, covered with wounds and blood,* is the sad story which afterwards often recurs, and produces the falling tear.

It is an awful scourge of God. "Be ye afraid of the sword, for wrath bringeth the judgments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment." Thus Job speaks. And says God, by the Prophet Ezekiel, "How much more when I bring my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beasts, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast."

Thus evident it is that when a people are visited even with a defensive and prosperous war, it is a scourge of God. But the, war, we, as a nation, are involved in, is of the worst, and most threatening nature. It is against every precept of Christianity, and all moral right against all wise policy, and every benevolent feeling. It is so, because declared by ourselves, and is an *offensive* war. It is so, because waged without any adequate cause. For, though the British have injured us, the injury received from them is greatly magnified by the prejudiced advocates of war. It is injury which affects our property and not our lives. So far as it affects the personal liberty of our marine citizens, whose liberty only it affects, it appears to be the result of the misbehavior and wantonness of subordinate officers, and not of any claims or pretensions of the government itself. The injury they do us, in point of property, the government solemnly professes to do reluctantly, and on a principle of self-defence. And we have really an ample remuneration for it, in the security which is, and might be much more extensively, afforded, to our merchant vessels, by their ships of war, and the profitable trade we are permitted to carry on in their extensive dominions. But I admit, it is not proper for me to discuss these particulars by any minute investigation. However we are all deeply concerned in the question of the lawfulness of this war. If it is unlawful, it is our indispensable duty to reprobate it, and to look upon it, in its peculiarly *threatening* aspect, as to our national ex-

istence. If it is unlawful, because offensive, and without any adequate cause, God will not be for us in the prosecution of the war, and it cannot be right for any Christian, publickly or privately, to pray for the success of our arms. It cannot be lawful for any one to do any thing in aid to it, more or less. That there is not adequate cause for this war any one may be fully convinced, who will attentively and candidly peruse the luminous pamphlets which the friends of peace have lately laid before the publick. [b]

The war is a most calamitous and threatening war again, as we enter upon it in a distracted and unprepared state ; against the wishes and endeavours of the best part of our native countrymen ; as it is the war of a party, and of a section of our country, and very much through the influence of men of an ungodly character, and of restless and tumultuous foreigners, who have too easily got a footing among us, and a most unmerited influence in our National Councils. It is a most calamitous, and threatening war farther, as it is against a nation, from which, as the excellent proclamation of our chief magistrate expresses, we are descended, and which, for many generations, has been the bulwark of the religion we profess and which ; from the adjacency of her territories, and especially from her immensely powerful marine, is capable, if disposed, of spreading desolation and distress along our sea-board, and for years, extinguishing the remains of our foreign commerce ; a nation with whom we ought by all means to covet to be at agree-

ment, that we may enjoy the benefit of their protection against a usurpation that threatens the conquest of the globe itself. Which leads to the remark, that this war is an exceedingly calamitous and threatening one, as it necessarily brings us into an alliance and co-operation with, and tends directly to subject us, as a nation, to the will of, Bonaparte, that fell tyrant and destroyer of the earth, the most cruel oppressor and murderer of his fellow-beings, the vilest of men, who tramples upon all truth and justice. It is in this view that the war into which we have been most foolishly precipitated is especially threatening. We cannot proceed in this war without subserving the views of this monster of ambition and cruelty ; and becoming, in effect, an integral part his dominions. And shall we be for Bonaparte, in his rage to desolate and subjugate the world ; shall we be for *him* ? Shall we follow his iron chariot, as he pushes on to conquest and blood ?

Such is the most odious aspect of this war.— Such is its threatening character on this account, altogether more threatening than the war of our revolution. For success here would be as certain destruction as the want of it. In short, this war must be brought to a speedy termination, or our ruin, as a nation, is inevitable. In this event, God speaks to us then, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy. I remark,

4. That the unaccountable infatuation, approaching even to phrenzy and madness, which has possessed, and continues to possess the minds of those who have the management of our gov-

ernment, and of the majorities in our legislative councils, is such, as strongly concurs with the other things that have been mentioned, to prove to us that God has pronounced this alarming sentence against us. We learn very clearly from the scripture that this is one of those judgments with which God executes his wrathful purpose of exterminating a guilty nation. "Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." If God could so expressly declare, that, in judgment, and as a punishment of his rebellious Israel, he would subject to such infatuation the minds of their principal men, who had the management of their national concerns, is it not to be presumed, that he has done so, and will continue to do so, with respect to other nations? And why should we be so conceited of the correctness of our own principles or proceedings, as to think that we must be certainly exempted? Whether we are or not, must be learned from a consideration of facts. Let us remember, that it is certainly true, as Dr. Young has observed, that a man, with the talents of an angel, may be a fool; *i. e.* practically. How often is this verified in affecting examples! Two of the greatest men of our country, of opposite political sentiments, and pursuits, were guilty of the enormous folly, of meeting each other in single combat, in which one of them fell, and the other has been a miserable, despised wanderer and vagabond

ever since. How often do we see men of great talents and extensive information, wasting their estates and destroying their lives in dissipation, debauchery and drunkenness? The wisdom of this world is all of it foolishness with God: and it is solemnly asked, "Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" If this is true in regard to the idolatries, and false philosophy of the world, why not in regard to the management of national concerns?

My friends, I do very much mistake my views and feelings, if I stand here as a political partizan. And far be it from me to say any thing, which can fairly be construed into an attack upon the constituted authorities of our country, acting in character. But if it be true and most evidently true, that the wisdom of our wise men has perished, and the understanding of our prudent men is hid, it is an awful judgment, and it is important that we should know it. And can any thing be more glaringly evident? If a man were to raise a field of corn, and when it was just about to get into the ear, should let in his cattle to devour it; or if, when he had reaped his grain, he should leave it to corrupt and perish in the field, or if, when he had filled his barn with the products of his labour, he should set fire to it and consume it, with all its contents; or if he should expend ninety pounds to save a shilling, would you not think that he was subject to a most unaccountable infatuation? Scarcely less glaringly indicative of phrenzy and infatuation, it appears to me, have

been the proceedings of our government lately, particularly in regard to the war in which it has plunged us. What greater infatuation could there be than to enter into a war of such hopeless prospect, with a power upon which we can make no impression, with such a large portion of the community against it, with an exhausted treasury, with diminished resources, without preparation, and sinking us to the will, and under the power, of the military despot of the earth? But I forbear. The evidence is before you. Judge of it, I pray you, with a righteous judgment. Consider what criminal influences, glaringly contrary to every dictate of a sound understanding, and a sober policy, must have led to the declaration and waging of this ruinous and hopeless war.-- I add,

5. As a farther evidence of the denunciation, the credulity and the corresponding infatuation of a large proportion, possibly a majority, at least in the southern, and southwestern sections of our country, of the citizens, who ardently favour these ruinous measures, and seem ready to go all lengths, with their misguided rulers. These people are not all equally criminal in this affair. Some are coldly consenting, for the want of information, and because the instructions they receive are from polluted sources. But a very large proportion seem to have a determination in error and folly, which has the aspect of a most alarming judgment. They are carried away by sound instead of sense ; by hollow professions of a regard to the people, on the part of their leaders ;

by scurrilous and unfounded tales, exciting prejudice and rancour against the friends of the Washingtonian and peace policy. They are deaf to reason, and blind to evidence. They generally neither read nor hear, but on one side of the question. And they really act with a phrenzy, similar to that, with which individuals commit suicide. How glaringly is this true, with respect to the advocates of this war in the southern states ! How do the measures they so blindly, and so determinately pursue, tend to dissolve the national compact, and throw us back into a state of nature, without any system of united operation, or the restraint of law ! And into what a ruin must this plunge *them*, especially when it is considered, what a prodigious multitude of slaves there is in that part of the Country, who are ready to avail themselves of any circumstance of weakness, to rise and massacre the whites, whom they consider, and rightly, as their oppressors ?

II. I proceed to notice the duty upon which a revocation of this denunciation is suspended. This is, *turning from the evil we have committed*. “ If that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil.” The evil which is the ground of this denunciation must be turned from. It must be searched out, in all the extent of it. It must be abhorred and forsaken. We must retrace our steps. We must come back by a sound repentance to our injured Creator. Our return must begin in the heart, and respect all our iniquities. It must be personal and general. It must be sincere and

thorough. He who turns sincerely and thoroughly, turns under solemn impressions of the infinite glory of God, his rightful claim to the homage and obedience of all his rational creatures, and, the obligations there are upon him to glorify God, constantly, and with all his powers. He turns, with his eyes upon the badness of his own heart, and the perverseness of his own conduct. He turns with abhorrence of his own ways. He turns with a sincere, universal, and permanent reformation. Thus must we turn from our evil.

Let us remember, my hearers, that we are guilty. The iniquities with which we are chargeable, and which provoke God to issue his sentence of extermination against us, are not confined to any individuals, to any section of our Country, to any class of citizens, or to any political creed. Let us remember that, if we turn with sincerity, and truly, from the iniquity we have committed, our reformation will carry us quite beyond the adoption of a wise political system, and the prosecution of wise political measures. It will carry us to the throne of grace, in humble prayer. It will make us religious. It will make us strictly religious. For, what are professions and prostrations worth, I beseech you, short of religion? What is any zeal worth which is not founded in piety, and has not ultimate respect to the glory of God?

We must bring ourselves, and our rulers, and our country, to God. We must become his by choice and by covenant, and walk in newness of life. And, let it be added, that we are here in ve-

ry great danger. Even those who are correct in their views of what concerns our national policy, are in danger of bringing additional guilt on themselves, and of contributing, and it may be as much as any others, to the destruction of their country, by refusing thus to turn, to turn in the sincerity of a sound reformation. We are in danger of resting in the mere forms, and outside of duty. We are in danger of fasting for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. We are in danger of having all our zeal limited to subjects of policy, and of putting religion into the back ground, whereas it ought to be always, with us, *the thing*. Let us consider,

III. The force of the motive which the text sets before us, to persuade us to the performance of this duty. "I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." This motive consists,

1. In the greatness of the good which will follow, I mean if the duty should be extensively and sincerely performed, that is, the salvation of our beloved country. This denunciation will be withdrawn; the frowning aspects of Providence will be changed. A gladdening prospect will open to view. As individuals, we shall dismiss our anxieties, and terrors, and repose ourselves upon the all-powerful arm of our Heavenly Father. We shall be amiable, respectable, and useful. We shall have the blessings of God's favour here, and the eternal, sinless enjoyment of him hereafter. We shall be united among ourselves, and the comforts of an affectionate intercourse will be restored. Our country will be

saved. As a nation, we shall be lifted up to respectability and honour. The righteous and wise and prudent will be in authority; and, under a wise and impartial administration of government, the people will lead quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty. We shall be far from oppression and war. This most calamitous war, in which we are now involved, will come to a speedy close. Its immense expenditures will stop. Its dangers and distresses will be removed. Cabal and tumult, riot and murder will subside. There will be no more effusion of the blood of our citizens. Amity, and a friendly commercial intercourse, will be restored between *us*, and the nation from which we descended. And, (what is the most important part of the national deliverance we shall experience) we shall be finally and completely delivered from the deadly embraces, the most cumbersome good-will of that infidel, sanguinary, cruel despotism, which has overturned so many republicks, and desolated so many countries. We shall be wise enough to keep aloof from the wars of Europe, and stand on the high ground of independent security.— Peace will be extended to us like a river, and prosperity as a flowing stream.

2. The force of the motive consists in part in the *certainty* that such a most desirable consequence will follow. If such a consequence were only probable, it would be sufficient to induce us to the performance of the duty. But we do not here calculate upon the ground of probabilities. We proceed upon that of certainty. There

are no things more certain than those of religion. There is nothing so much entitled to confidence as the explicit declaration of God. His declarations to the subject before us are explicit, and often repeated. “I *will* repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.—They that seek me *shall* find me.—He who confesseth and forsaketh his sins *shall* find mercy.—God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall not he do it? Hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?” Hence the declaration of the Psalmist, “Happy is that people, that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.” And hence the exhortation of the prophet, “Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath broken, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us. In the third day he will lift us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning, and he shall come unto us as the rain, and as the latter and former rain unto the earth.”

3. The force of the motive consists, in part, in the reasonableness, the practicability, and the moral excellency, of the term of the blessing. Moral evil is greater than natural. It is to be infinitely detested, and most carefully shunned. It is most reasonable in itself that we should renounce it. We ought to abhor it with all our hearts, and renounce it, with strong and fixed resolutions, in the strength of divine grace, that we

will no more practice it, that it shall no more defile our hearts or our lives, though we were sure that no penal calamity would follow it, and that no blessing would result from the forsaking of it.

Repentance or forsaking of evil is a practicable, as well as reasonable thing. No difficulty attends it. It is no hard sacrifice. It is pleasant rather than painful.


It is also morally excellent. It separates from the sinful, and conforms to a holy God. Then, and then only, does the sinner appear amiable, when he breaks off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by turning unto God; when he is humbled and grieved; in the dust, taking refuge in the divine mercy, and supplicating it in the all-prevailing name of Christ. Many would think it a grand acquisition, and a most gainful purchase, if we could bring this war to a successful issue, be freed from all our national embarrassments, and have our national prosperity permanently established, though at the expense of millions of treasure, and thousands of lives. But, turning from our iniquity, while it is a more certain way to such a successful result than the most efficacious policy, or the greatest prosperity in arms can possibly be, is infinitely easier. Instead of being an evil, it is itself a good. It is a rapid cure. It is immediately efficacious. It is a sovereign balm.

4. The force of the motive consists also in part in the consolation, which will be derived to us personally, if in this way we successfully contri-

bute to the safety and welfare of our Country. The Roman generals, who had been very successful in their battles, and extended the fame of the Republick, were often honoured with splendid triumphs, which were to them, scenes of exultation, and rejoicing. They who have done any brilliant action, though destitute of all virtue, by which they have achieved some great thing for their king or country, reflect on it; and speak of it often with pleasure. We are accustomed to honour Washington as the political saviour of his Country, and think he must have had great consolation of mind when the object, for which the country took up arms, was achieved; when the labours of the war, and its hazards were over, and he retired into the calm of domestick life. But we may be all as really, as effectually, and perhaps more honourably, saviours of our country, if we will turn from the evil we have committed, and devote ourselves unfeignedly to the service of God; and our consolations will be as pure, and as permanent. Even if the penitent and the obedient are, comparatively, but a remnant, it is possible that, for their sakes, God will spare the land; at least delay its destruction.

But, has the motive nothing more to gain upon our feelings? Does it imply nothing alarming in the case of the utter neglect of our duty, in the case of our continuing obstinate, irreclaimable, and bent on our iniquities? In case our country goes from bad to worse, and sinks deeper and deeper, by the protraction of this unjust war, and the practice of its concomitant crimes, in the

evil which is the ground of the denunciation gone out against us? If the condition of removal be not performed, the denunciation must remain, and, sooner or later, be carried into effect. We must be plucked up, pulled down, and destroyed. This republick, the only solitary one which exists on the earth, the purchase of so much blood, and anxiety, and treasure, must be overwhelmed, under the judgments of God, and the blessings of liberty be exchanged for an intolerable servitude. O then, let us not delay to perform this duty. O that a genuine repentance might spread through our country! Let *us*, at least, do our part, as individuals. Let us search out our iniquity, and chase it, as we would a robber and an assassin, from all its hiding places. Let us go to the blood of atonement for cleansing. Let us rise to newness of life. Let us follow God, as dear children. Thus we may be instrumental in saving our country from that destruction which threatens it; if not, one thing is certain, we shall personally survive its ruin, and live forever.

 Some notes were prepared; but as the sermon has filled the number of pages calculated upon, they are omitted.











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